

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Mai Thao Le. I was raised in Bristol, CT, and recently became a resident Berlin, CT.

I am in support of APAAC, the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, and am volunteering as the Health Advisory Committee of the Asian Pacific American Coalition board. Our community is already diverse as Asian Pacific Americans and is often overlooked in important issues in CT. The APA community needs a constant presence within the state to be the voice of those in need and to determine and bring out all other concerns that have not been addressed.

Our culture values modesty and harmony, but that does not mean that we do not benefit from confrontation to address issues of concern within our community and within the state as a whole. We need a voice through APAAC to be the voice and confront these issues in order to bring a change.

The common myth for the “melting pot” strips away diversity and brushes away our individualized issues. Assimilation versus acculturation in the APA community led to the belief that the APA does not have any specialized needs. The APA community lacks resources, such as language and culture access to programs, services, healthcare, and other areas of our community.

The Model Minority Myth continues to create perception that APAs communities face no barriers to education, employment, health, and other quality of life measures. The APA community lack supports in areas of the legal and health care systems where we do have needs and do not have the resources to make informed decisions to address our concerns.

There are presently no entities our advocacy groups that focus on the needs and concerns of all APA communities. APAAC works to connect different APA communities together to achieve common goals

I thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Mai Thao Le